

(Mr. BOEHNER), the ranking member, the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HOYER), the gentleman from Ohio (Mr. NEY), and the gentleman from Pennsylvania (Mr. FATTAH).

Mr. Speaker, I thank the gentleman.

Mr. HOYER. Mr. Speaker, I withdraw my reservation of objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 87

Resolved, That the following named Members be, and they are hereby, elected to the following joint committees of Congress, to serve with the chairman of the Committee on House Administration:

Joint Committee of Congress on the Library: Mr. Boehner, Mr. Ehlers, Mr. Hoyer, and Mr. Davis of Florida.

Joint Committee on Printing: Mr. Boehner, Mr. Ney, Mr. Hoyer, and Mr. Fattah.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

ELECTION OF MEMBER TO CERTAIN STANDING COMMITTEES OF THE HOUSE

Mr. THOMAS. Mr. Speaker, I offer a resolution (H. Res. 88) and ask unanimous consent for its immediate consideration.

The Clerk read the resolution, as follows:

H. RES. 88

Resolved, That the following named Member be, and he is hereby, elected to the following standing committees of the House of Representatives:

Committee on Education and the Workforce: Mr. Isakson.

Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure: Mr. Isakson.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from California?

There was no objection.

The resolution was agreed to.

A motion to reconsider was laid on the table.

SPECIAL ORDERS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 6, 1999, and under a previous order of the House, the following Members will be recognized for 5 minutes each.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. STEARNS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. STEARNS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Tennessee (Mr. FORD) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. FORD addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

CONDEMNING THE CUBAN DICTATORSHIP'S CRACKDOWN ON THE INTERNAL OPPOSITION

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DIAZ-BALART) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DIAZ-BALART. Mr. Speaker, in recent weeks the Cuban dictatorship has carried out a brutal crackdown of the brave internal opposition and independent press, taking Cuba's four best known internal opponents, Felix Bonne Carcasses, Marta Beatriz Roque Cabello, Vladimiro Roca Antunez, and Rene Gomez Manzano, to trial on trumped-up charges, and arresting scores of other peaceful opponents without cause or justification.

The internal opposition in Cuba is working intensely and valiantly to draw international attention to Cuba's deplorable human rights situation, and continues to strengthen and grow, despite the Stalinist repression, in its opposition to the Castro dictatorship.

At this time of extraordinary repression, the internal opposition requires and deserves the firm and unwavering support and solidarity of the international community. The Cuban dictatorships repressive crackdown against the brave internal opposition and the independent press must be condemned in the strongest possible terms.

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The internal opposition and independent press of Cuba have our profound admiration and firm solidarity.

We must demand of the Cuban dictatorship the release of all political prisoners, the legalization of all political parties, labor unions and the press, and the scheduling of free and fair internationally supervised elections.

Mr. Speaker, I call on the government of Spain, of Prime Minister Aznar, to cancel the announced trip to Castro's Cuba of the King of Spain; and I call upon the member states of the Ibero-American summit to boycott the upcoming meeting that has been, incredibly, scheduled for November in the capital of the Cuban dictatorship.

Martin Luther King rightfully declared that an injustice anywhere is an affront to injustice everywhere. Going to Cuba to shake the Cuban tyrant's hand would be an ultimately immoral act. Now, more than ever, it is incumbent upon the entire international community to demonstrate firm solidarity with the oppressed people of

Cuba and with the brave internal opposition.

According to press reports from Cuba, the following dissidents and journalists have been arrested by the Cuban dictatorship in the last few days:

Efren Martinez Pulgaron, Ana Maria Ortega Jimenez, Marisela Pompa, Angel Polanco, Odilia Collazo, Arnaldo Ramos, Lazaro Rodriguez, Jose Orlando Gonzalez Bridon, Lazaro Cala, Felix Perera, Oswaldo Paya Sardinas, Ofelia Nardo Cruz, Regis Iglesias, Angel Moya Acosta, Miriam Cantillo, Benigno Torralba, Ramon Alfonso William, Gisela Concepcion Bolanos, Marvin Hernandez Monzon, Jesus David Martinez Garcia, Julian Martinez Baez, Juan Francisco Monzon Oviedo, Nestor Rodriguez Lobaina, Ivan Hernandez Carrillo, Felix Navarro Rodriguez, Pedro H. Rojas, Leonel Morejon Almagro, Reinaldo Cosano Allen, Jesus Llanes Pelletier, Maria Menendez Villar, Oscar Elias Biscet, Rolando Munoz Yyobre, Miriam Cantillo, Omar Rodriguez Saludos, Diosdado Gonzalez Marrero, Ileana Somiellán Fleitas, Nanci Sotolongo, Odalys Curbelo, Juan Antonio Sanchez, Hector Cruz, Israel Bayon, Raul Rivero and Orlando Bordon.

There are certainly many others who have been arrested but who we have not been able to find out about as of yet.

Mr. Speaker, our admiration, our support, and our prayers go out to all of these brave Cuban patriots and to all of the suffering and oppressed Cuban people.

TEXAS INDEPENDENCE DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. SHIMKUS). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. GREEN) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GREEN of Texas. Mr. Speaker, today is a special day, particularly in Texas, because in Texas March 2 is Texas Independence Day. In 1836, 163 years ago today, the Republic of Texas was born. As I left Houston this morning, spring is coming to Texas. The bluebonnets are blooming, and we are actually seeing a lot of changes, and that is what has happened in Texas.

Mr. Speaker, let me set the stage for what happened 163 years ago. On March 1, 1836, 54 delegates representing settlements across Texas gathered for the Texas Convention of 1836 in a small farm village at Washington-on-the-Brazos.

From the beginning, it was an event marked by haste and urgency because Santa Anna's forces were closing in on the defenders of the Alamo. Within days it would fall, setting off a chain reaction of defeats for the small Texas Army, which would nevertheless emerge victorious at the battle of San Jacinto 6 weeks later on April 21. March 2 is when the delegates in Washington-on-the-Brazos actually drew up the Constitution and declared independence.

Mr. Speaker, what were these brave Texans fighting for? Up to this point, it was simply to restore the Mexican Constitution of 1824, which had been suspended by Santa Anna.

On the night of March 1, a group of five men stayed up late into the night drafting the document that would be approved the next day by the full convention, a document that echoes the lines of its American counterpart, the Texas Declaration of Independence.

It started off in much the same way, with the words, "When a government has ceased to protect the lives, liberty and property of the people." It spoke of the numerous injustices inflicted upon the settlers of the state of Coahuila y Tejas: the elimination of the state's legislative body, the denial of religious freedom, the elimination of the civil justice system, and the confiscation of firearms being the most intolerable, particularly in Texas.

Finally, it ended with the declaration that, because of the injustice of Santa Anna's tyrannical government, Texans were severing their connection with the Mexican nation and declaring themselves "a free, sovereign, and independent republic. . . fully invested with all the rights and attributes" that belong to independent nations; and a declaration that they "fearlessly and confidently" committed their decision to "the Supreme arbiter of the destinies of nations."

Over the next 2 weeks, a constitution was drafted and an interim government was formed, despite daily reports from the front detailing the collapse of the Alamo and subsequent advance of the Mexican Army through Texas. On March 17, 1836, the government was forced to flee Washington-on-the-Brazos on the news of the advance of General Santa Anna.

Just over a month later, however, independence would be secured in the form of a victory over that same army by Sam Houston, a delegate at the very convention, and his courageous fighters at the battle of San Jacinto.

Mr. Speaker, let me remind folks from Tennessee that Sam Houston served in this Congress from the State of Tennessee. I have at times kidded my friends from Tennessee saying, "The best of Tennessee immigrated to Texas in the 1830s."

From that point on, Texas was firmly established in the community of nations; and for 10 years she stood and remained an independent nation, until President James K. Polk signed the treaty admitting Texas to the United States in 1845.

Mr. Speaker, I hope the Congress and the whole country will join us today on March 2 in a day that in Texas we celebrate, our schoolchildren celebrate, Texas Independence Day.

GOOD EDUCATION FOR OUR CHILDREN WILL ENSURE AMERICA'S FUTURE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentle-

woman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. WOOLSEY. Mr. Speaker, I ran for Congress, and I am here today, because I believe that our children's education must be the number one priority in this country. We must prepare all of our children for the high-skill, high-wage jobs that will ensure America's leadership in the world marketplace and, at the same time prevent dependency on welfare here at home.

Public education is the backbone of our country. It is why we are a great Nation. Public education must be available to all, and it must be the best in the world. Public education does not discriminate; and it must be strengthened, not weakened.

This Congress, we have an opportunity that comes along only once every 5 years, and that is the opportunity to review and update the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, ESEA.

ESEA is best known for Title I, the education for the disadvantaged. ESEA is known for the dollars it sends to schools. Title I is important because it helps disadvantaged children achieve along with their more fortunate peers, and it helps poor and impacted schools and school districts keep up with the more advantaged schools and school districts in this Nation.

Title I must be supported; and, as well, we must ensure that every child gets individual attention in the early grades to build a solid foundation for future learning. We can do this by making the administration's initiative to reduce class size permanent. This initiative helps school districts recruit, hire, and train enough qualified teachers to reduce class size to an average of 18 in grades 1 through 3.

Current research findings prove what parents and teachers have known for years: Kids who are in smaller class sizes learn better, especially in the lower grades. Our schools need 100,000 new, well-trained teachers.

We also know how hard it is for children even in small classes to learn in trailers or in old school buildings that are crumbling around them. I support the President's proposal to make it easier for school districts to fund needed schools and to build new ones by providing interest rate subsidies for school construction bonds over the next 2 years. Is it not time to show all of our children that their school is as important as a shopping mall or as a prison?

While I certainly support the current emphasis on ending social promotions, ESEA is also the place to assist all schools in preventing students from failing in the first place. Title XI of ESEA lets school districts spend up to 5 percent of their Federal education funds on coordinated services, services that will bring schools and their local communities together to make sure that, every day, every student comes to school ready to learn. Services such as health care, before and after school

care, and tutoring ensure that no child is doomed to fail before they even enter the classroom.

There are wonderful examples all around the Nation of schools and communities working together to lift children and their families out of an endless cycle of failure and into a future of success.

Students who are ready to learn need well-trained teachers who are experts in their subjects. They need a challenging curriculum and up-to-date technology to prepare them for the sophisticated world we live in. Every student, regardless of family income, race or gender must have access to the most modern technological education available.

In addition, teachers as well as students must have mentors; and they must have support for learning to use technology so that they will be comfortable and knowledgeable in a technological environment.

As a member of both the Committee on Education and the Workforce and the Committee on Science, I am excited to have this significant opportunity to make positive changes in our children's education; to remove any economic or gender gap in science, math and technology; to ensure small classes with well-trained teachers; to provide funding for modern, safe schools; and to give all students a world-class education.

Mr. Speaker, children are only 25 percent of our population, but they are 100 percent of our future. A sound public school system is how we protect that future. A good education for all of our children will ensure America's future.

CONGRESS MUST HELP THE PEOPLE OF SOUTHERN SUDAN

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I want to speak on the issue of Sudan. But, before I do, I want to just pay tribute to the gentleman from Colorado (Mr. TANCREDO) for taking his time and getting involved in a very important issue with regard to slavery in Sudan.

I also want to congratulate the students at Highline Community School in Aurora, Colorado. They have done an amazing thing with regard to getting people who were in slavery in southern Sudan free.

Mr. Speaker, I have been in Sudan on three different occasions. The world does not know it, but these students in Colorado know it. There is slavery going on in Sudan, and these students are making a tremendous effort. Because of them, 1,000 slaves have been released, and I just want to take out this special order in tribute to them.

Mr. Speaker, for the past several months, the students of Barbara Vogel's fourth grade class have been raising money to help free slave children as part of the public awareness